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ABSTRACT

This summary report presents a brief overview of the Pilot Cities program, its outcomes, and the conclusions and recommendations contained in the full 194-page report. The program selected a group of eight cities to demonstrate and evaluate promising ideas and technologies for improving criminal justice. A small team of criminal justice experts, independent of specific agencies, was established in various cities to stimulate change, provide technical assistance, and conduct research. A twenty-month evaluation of the program found that the team concept could work well. The evaluation also uncovered a number of shortcomings in the program. One finding illuminates the tension between innovation on the one hand and improvement on the other. The two are not found to be mutually reinforcing, as they may actually compete with each other. The document contains the following: the nature and the purpose of the program, program accomplishments (start-up, team activities and team impact), and conclusions and recommendations. The latter are grouped under three headings: the concepts of innovation and improvement as they apply to changes in law enforcement and criminal justice; the lessons of the program for advancing the state of the law enforcement and criminal justice art; and, recommendations for exploiting the team approach to improving local criminal justice systems. (Author/AM)

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THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE PILOT CITIES PROGRAM

Executive Summary

ED127396

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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FOREWORD

As the research center of LEAA, the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice tests and evaluates new approaches to improving criminal justice. The results of one such experiment -- the Pilot Cities Program -- are summarized in this evaluation report.

The program selected a group of eight cities to demonstrate and evaluate promising ideas and technologies. A small team of criminal justice experts, independent of specific agencies, was established in each city to stimulate change, provide technical assistance, and conduct research.

A twenty-month evaluation of the program found that the team concept could work well. It proved an effective approach to improving criminal justice that should be applied further. Overall, the evaluators concluded that the process of change need not be seen as wholly dependent on personalities or special circumstances. Successful strategies -- such as the Pilot team approach -- can be developed and transplanted to other localities even though the circumstances and personalities may be different.

The evaluation also uncovered a number of shortcomings in the program. One provocative finding illuminates the tension between "innovation" on the one hand and "improvement" on the other. As the report points out, the two are not mutually reinforcing; indeed, they may actually compete with each other. So much more is known about advanced practices than is ever applied in any single jurisdiction that it can be highly productive to pull together the best available approaches and test them systematically, rather than focus on "new" ways of doing things.

Gerald M. Caplan,
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 1970, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) awarded the initial grant for what was to become known as the Pilot Cities Program. The grant, to establish a Pilot Cities Team in San Jose/Santa Clara County, California, was followed by awards to seven other city/county pairs, so that by June 1972 there were eight Pilot Cities.[1]

In November 1973, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) was awarded the contract to conduct the national evaluation of the Program.

In June 1974, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) prepared a report on the Program which concluded that its national benefits were too limited to justify continuation. Shortly thereafter, LEAA announced that the Pilot Cities Program would be phased out by the end of fiscal year 1975.

As it happened, the draft version of the national evaluation was delivered 30 June 1975--the very date that the truncated Program expired. The final version of that report, summarized in this document, discusses both the failures that led to the Program's early termination and the successes that were cited in its defense. But the main purpose of the evaluation has not been a retrospective analysis of how eight specific Teams in eight specific cities could do it all over again, better. The main purpose has been to evaluate the lessons of the Program. And the summary lesson of the evaluation is that

> *The central concept of the Pilot Cities Program is sound; it is an effective approach to improving local law enforcement and criminal justice systems, and one which should be applied further.*

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[1] In order of funding, the eight city/county pairs were: San Jose/Santa Clara, California (5/70); Dayton/Montgomery, Ohio (cont'd)

The conclusion is based on analyses of a very extensive body of quantitative and qualitative data. The data, the analytic results, and their implications are presented in full, in a 194-page report. This Summary is a brief overview of the Program, its outcomes, and the conclusions and recommendations contained in the full report.

THE NATURE AND THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The mechanics of the Program were simple. A small group of experts in law enforcement and criminal justice was to be installed in a medium-sized American city; not as part of the police, or the courts, or the city manager's office; not as a local arm of LEAA; but as an independent unit which could work with all aspects of the law enforcement/criminal justice (LE/CJ) system, across city and county boundaries, to introduce the best in available techniques and to assist in the development of better ones.

A Pilot Cities Team was comprised of four senior "Associate Directors" ("Associates," for convenience) and a small supporting staff of research and clerical assistants. It was intended that each of the Associates would have expertise in one or more of four fields: police, courts, corrections, or systems analysis. Combined, the members of the Team would cover all four fields.[2] The Teams were to operate for five years, in three twenty-month phases. Each Team would receive operating funds of roughly $400,000 per phase, and an annual entitlement for that city/county of $500,000 in non-competitive "Pilot O" funds, which agencies in the chosen city/county could seek through the ordinary grant application process. A major function of the Team was to help develop project ideas for the use of the Pilot O monies.

The structure and operating procedures for the Teams

(fn 1 cont'd) (7/70); Charlotte/Mecklenburg, North Carolina (12/70); Albuquerque/Bernalillo, New Mexico (2/71); Norfolk/Metropolitan area (hereafter called "the Tidewater"), Virginia (9/71); Omaha/Douglas, Nebraska (9/71); Des Moines/Polk, Iowa (9/71); and Rochester/Monroe, New York (6/72).

[2] "A Note on Organization of the Teams," 41-42; "The Ideal Pilot Team Associate," 42-50. (unless otherwise specified, notes reference the full report)

were reasonably clear from the outset; what they were to accomplish was less so. The Pilot Cities Program ran through several sets of objectives, none of which reflected a genuine consensus.[3] The technically definitive statement of purpose is this, from the official LEAA guideline on the subject:

a) To demonstrate the ability of an interdisciplinary team with exceptional research and analysis abilities to work with an operating criminal justice system and within a period of five years to contribute significantly to the improved ability of that system to reduce crime and delinquency and improve the quality of justice.

b) To institutionalize the gains made during the Pilot Cities Program by building into the target area's criminal justice system the research and analysis capability necessary for system-wide, problem-oriented planning and program evaluation.

c) To understand more clearly the process by which change takes place in the criminal justice system so that more effective means can be devised for the nationwide dissemination and possible implementation of well-tested innovations.[4]

In one form or another, all three of these goals were recognized throughout the life of the Pilot Program. But this particular statement first appeared in a document dated January 1973, when the first Pilot Cities Team was already finishing its third year. The Program was plagued throughout its existence by shifts in emphasis, changes in priority, and conflicting interpretations of the "real" objectives.[5]

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[3] "The Evolution of Objectives," 11-17

[4] Quoted from "LEAA Guideline: Pilot Cities/Counties Program," p. 2. The document is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix A of the full report.

[5] "The Evolution of Objectives," 11-17.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: START-UP

There were implementation failures from the outset and many of the deficiencies can be attributed to LEAA and NILECJ management.[6] There were weaknesses in site selection, in the establishment of guidelines, in the selection of grantees, and in some grantees' staffing of the Teams. In general, the AIR evaluation endorses the GAO findings which deal with program design and management. The major technical shortcomings were these:

- *The goals of the Program were not spelled out at the outset.* To the extent that initial Program goals were stated, they were unrealistically ambitious (e.g., to create model LE/CJ systems).[7]

- *The ten criteria developed for site selection were poorly defined and, taken together, so restrictive that probably no city could have met a good definition of all of them.* Priorities were needed to establish what was *required* in a Pilot site, as opposed to what would have been desirable. For example, crime rate was just one of the ten criteria topics. Six of the eight cities were chosen even though they had recent crime rates which were lower than the average for cities of similar size.[8]

- *As a whole, the Associates on the Pilot Teams were not the cadre of LE/CJ research experts they were intended to be.* Almost half--fifteen--of the original thirty-two Associates lacked substantial experience in an LE/CJ agency *and* lacked professional research credentials *and* lacked a terminal degree in an LE/CJ speciality. Fifteen of the original Associates met only one of those three qualifications. Only two of the thirty-two met two of them. None met all three.[9]

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[6] NILECJ--The National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice--is the research arm of LEAA. It was the LEAA office with direct responsibility for designing the Pilot Cities Program and overseeing its evaluation.

[7] "The Evolution of Objectives," 11-17.

[8] "The Ten Criteria for Site Selection," 24-26; "Application of the Quantitative Criteria," 26-34.

[9] "The Initial Teams," 41-56; "Impact and the Nature of the Team: Personnel Qualifications," 173-175.

- *Only two of the eight selected grantees could point to substantial institutional experience in LE/CJ research.*[10]

- *Only half of the Teams maintained enough continuity in staff and leadership to warrant the descriptor, "team."* None of the other four functioned as a cohesive unit for longer than a single twenty-month phase.[11]

- *The Regional Offices received no clear guidance on the limits of their responsibilities for the Pilot Teams;* and this was a major factor in provoking some Regional Offices to interfere excessively in Team activities.[12]

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TEAM ACTIVITIES

The Pilot Teams were supposed to achieve the Program's objectives by conducting three types of activity: *demonstration projects, Pilot research* on local LE/CJ problems, and *technical assistance* to local LE/CJ agencies. The activities of the eight Teams may be summarized as follows.

Ninety-eight *demonstration projects* were funded wholly or predominantly as a product of the Teams' efforts. Initial funding from both Federal and local sources was $17,800,000, or roughly $600.000 per city per year. An additional $8,200,000 in continuation funding had been allocated by the end of calender 1974. Overall, about $26,000,000 was devoted to LE/CJ projects sponsored by the Teams during the life of the Program.[13]

One hundred thirty *Pilot research activities*, initiated by the Teams, were identified. Forty of these were baseline data surveys; thirty-three were descriptive research; forty-one were analytic studies; nine were evaluations; and seven were planning studies.[14]

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[10] "Application of the Grantee Criterion," 38-40.

[11] "The Teams Over Time," 56-64; "Impact and the Nature of the Team: Structural Integrity," 173.

[12] "The Regional Offices and Process," 104-105.

[13] "Demonstration Projects," 107-117.

[14] "Pilot Research," 117-122.

One hundred five activities were put under the label, *technical assistance*. They spanned a wide range of types. Thirty-nine were general consulting services; eighteen were evaluations conducted at the request of a local agency; forty-two were research support in response to needs expressed by local agencies; and six were workshops or seminars.[15]

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TEAM IMPACT

The Pilot Teams' impact was assessed in terms of the two fundamental objectives of the Program. For each objective, three indicators were used.

Objective I: To build the capability of the local LE/CJ system

Indicator 1: impact on local agency operations
Indicator 2: impact on the research, planning, and evaluation (RPE) capabilities of local LE/CJ agencies
Indicator 3: impact on inter-agency communication and coordination

Objective II: To contribute to national LE/CJ theory and practice

Indicator 4: development of innovations in LE/CJ practice
Indicator 5: contribution to the LE/CJ theoretical state of the art
Indicator 6: development of projects with widespread utility elsewhere

The Program's level of impact varied greatly, depending on whether Objective I or Objective II was at issue.

1. Accomplishment of Objective I. Presentation of the quantitative data relating to Objective I occupies some fifteen pages of the full report. A quick summary is that of 228 activities (demonstration projects, research, and technical assistance) evaluated, 142 achieved one or more of the three indicators of impact. Twenty-one achieved all three, fifty-two achieved two of the

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[15] "Technical Assistance," 122-126.

three, and sixty-nine satisfied one of the indicators.[16]

Taking the Team as the unit of analysis, these overall judgments emerged from the evaluation:

San Jose. As a vehicle for improving the local LE/CJ system, the San Jose Team was a resounding success. The quantitative analyses put it far out in front of the other seven Teams, and they are backed by detailed and convincing qualitative evidence of impact.

The Tidewater. The numbers put the Tidewater second on all three of the Objective I indicators, and they fairly reflect the qualitative record. The Tidewater Team was clearly the second most successful Team relative to the other seven, and a solid, unequivocal success in terms of its absolute impact on the four LE/CJ systems which it served. One indication of this is the energetic effort made by the leaders of local LE/CJ agencies to maintain the Team after the Pilot Cities Program was phased out.

Rochester. With a life of only three years, the Rochester Team appeared to be getting into stride just as phaseout was announced. Rochester's style contrasted with those of San Jose and the Tidewater--it tended more toward research than the other two, and was less aggressively oriented toward operation programs. But it did produce several important projects, and was being used as a source of advice and assistance by all of the leading components of the system. Given a full five years, the Rochester Team could reasonably have been expected to achieve results on the order of those of the San Jose and Tidewater Teams.

Charlotte. Of all the Teams, we are least confident about how to assess Charlotte. If the Charlotte Team is measured against its own standards of what it wanted to accomplish, it did very well. Measured against LEAA's expectations, it did not. The Charlotte Team explicitly refused to force the pace; it stood ready to *respond*, once its assistance had been sought. And the Team's responses usually were timely, supportive, and competent. Yet, the Team was perceived by local LE/CJ agencies as being aloof, detached, perhaps too piously reticent to take the initiative. A fair overall summary statement about the Charlotte Team seems to be that it

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[16] "Institutionalized Improvement of Local Systems," 129-143.

performed its self-defined role with integrity; and it could have achieved much more than it did.

Des Moines. The Des Moines Team, like Rochester's, appeared to be gaining momentum when the phaseout of the Pilot Cities Program was announced. Its achievements during Phase I had been marginal. In Phase II a new director and an improved relationship with the Regional Office were resulting in an improved level of achievement. Then, activity fell off when it became known that the Program would be terminated early. Overall, the Des Moines Team did not achieve a substantial level of impact during its existence. It was moving in that direction.

Dayton. The Dayton Team's history was characterized by disruption and confusion from the start. The Team survived for nearly the full five years, and in the process managed to implement a number of demonstration projects. In that sense, it did have some positive effects. But the Team was never able to establish itself in the role envisioned for Pilot Teams, as adviser and facilitator for the LE/CJ system.

Albuquerque. The Albuquerque experience was different than Dayton's in specifics, but not in overall effect. Projects which had value were funded, technical assistance was provided, but the concept behind the Program was not realized.

Omaha. The Omaha Team was a failure by every measure of achievement. A mediocre performance in Phase I (for which the Regional Office and the city share responsibility with the Team) was followed by disaster in Phase II. It is nearly impossible to point to a positive outcome of the Omaha program which could not have been produced more easily and cheaply by providing the money without the Team.

These labels of success and failure must be judgmental. There is no natural standard of satisfactory performance on the three indicators of impact on the local system, for it is not known what a Team *should* be able to accomplish in five years. If the record for the three clearest "successes" is read as a whole, this could be said as a summary of their local impact: As a result of their presence, many substantial and positive changes occurred in the ways that local LE/CJ agencies went about performing their functions; major agencies, including the police and courts, added people, skills, and

hardware that increased their permanent capability to do their own applied research and evaluation; major segments of the system were linked through continuing relationships which did not exist prior to the Teams' efforts. The systems were improved; they were not transformed. Similar improvements were occurring on a smaller scale in the less successful cities as well.[17]

The available data also indicate that the Teams were affecting the *course* of local LE/CJ development as well as its rate. *Changes were occurring which apparently would not have occurred through the usual grant process*, and this may well be the most significant aspect of the Program's results. A major concern of LEAA, and one of the principal motivations for the Pilot Cities Program, was to induce the kinds of changes which will lead to *self-sustaining* improvements. Increases in local research, planning and evaluation (RPE) capabilities and increases in inter-agency coordination are key elements in that process. It is therefore of considerable interest that *the mean level of impact on both of those dimensions was significantly higher for Pilot demonstration projects than for non-Pilot demonstration projects.* Statistically, forty-one percent of the Pilot demonstrations resulted in either actual or planned increases in RPE resources, compared to only twelve percent of the non-Pilot demonstrations. Fifty-six percent of the Pilot demonstrations resulted in new and continuing inter-agency relationships, compared to ten percent of the non-Pilot demonstrations.[18]

3. *Accomplishment of Objective II.* When we turn to Objective II, impact on national LE/CJ theory and practice, the evidence is much less positive. One of the successes on Objective I (San Jose) also had documentable effects on systems in other cities--to quote a senior official of a large western city which is benefiting from a San Jose idea, "They are doing a hell of a service for the criminal justice systems of this nation." But the San Jose Team probably represents a maximum level of dissemination impact which can be expected from a Pilot Team, not just a "success." And even in San

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[17] "Differences Among the Teams: Improving the Local LE/CJ System," 150-156.

[18] "The Effectiveness of the Pilot Team Approach in Shaping LE/CJ Change," 164-167.

Jose, the extent to which the Team contributed novel techniques (as contrasted with simply *better* techniques) is questionable. Overall, *for even the successful Pilot Cities Teams, impact on national theory and practice was negligible.*[19]

This conclusion is supported by the assessment of Pilot demonstration projects on the three impact indicators for Objective II, as compiled from the ratings of nine expert judges.[20]

For the first of the indicators, *development of innovations*, it was the consensus of these observers that *almost all of the Pilot demonstration projects were well within the range of established LE/CJ practice.*[21]

Results were somewhat more favorable for the second indicator, *contribution to the LE/CJ state of the art.* The assessment of the judges was that *roughly one-third of the projects have a potential (if competently evaluated) of contributing answers to important unresolved issues in law enforcement and criminal justice.* This, of course, also means that two-thirds of the projects were judged to be of marginal interest.[22]

On the third indicator of impact on theory and practice, *the extent of utility in other cities*, the results again showed unimpressive impact. In the judges' estimate, *the average Pilot Cities demonstration project is either already being done in more than two out of three cities, or is not worth doing in those cities which do not have it.*[23]

Differences among the eight Teams in impact on Objective II are discussed in the full report, but absolute impact was generally so minor that the differences have little significance.[24]

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[19] "Differences Among the Teams: Advancing LE/CJ Theory and Practice," 156-158.

[20] For information on the rating procedures and the panel of judges, see Appendix C of the full report.

[21] "Innovation and Advancement," 143-148.

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Transferability and Dissemination," 148-152.

[24] "Differences Among the Teams: Advancing LE/CJ Theory and Practice," 156-158.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final section of the full report (Section XI, 177-194) presents forty-one conclusions and recommendations. They have two types of application. Some of the findings suggest guidelines for designing and implementing LEAA programs. Portions of the section are devoted to recommendations of this type, and they are quite specific. The Pilot Cities Program also illuminates policy issues which are fundamental to the way that LEAA goes about its mission. Recommendations relating to those issues are addressed in as broad a context as possible.

The conclusions and recommendations are grouped under three headings. The first of these deals with *the concepts of "innovation" and "improvement" as they apply to changes in law enforcement and criminal justice.* We believe that the Pilot Cities experience highlights a tension between the two concepts which is too seldom recognized. The second heading deals with *the lessons of the Program for advancing the state of the LE/CJ art.* We have stated that the Teams accomplished very little on this objective; what did their failure suggest about the *right* way to do it? The third heading turns to recommendations for *exploiting the team approach to improving local criminal justice systems.*

1. *Improvement or Innovation: Some Problems of Priority.* In the design of social action programs, it has generally been taken for granted that the way to make progress is to develop new approaches, test them, and then adopt and disseminate the ones that work. Programs initiated by LEAA have generally followed this model. At the beginning of the Pilot Cities Program, the improvement of local systems *through* innovation was the stated objective. But a consistent theme of the Pilot Cities history is that *innovation and improvement are not the mutually reinforcing objectives that they were assumed to be.* Our findings raise serious questions about the necessity of innovation as a vehicle for improvement and even suggest that *innovation may compete with improvement in an operational setting.*

This conclusion applies most emphatically to improvement in local LE/CJ operations. Viewing the Pilot Cities experience as a whole, a central finding of this study has been that

(1) *Improvement of local criminal justice systems and innovation in criminal justice techniques are very different tasks calling for different approaches, different types of people, and different magnitudes of resources.*

If LEAA asks, "What did the Pilot Cities Program accomplish in finding new solutions to LE/CJ problems?" the answer is, "Very little." If LEAA asks instead, "What did the Pilot Cities Program accomplish in improving local LE/CJ systems?" the answer is, "Quite a lot, including a sound general approach that can be applied more widely." There is no contradiction in these contrasting results. Given the state of LE/CJ practice in most American cities, the fact is that *innovation is often unnecessary to improve local systems*, because

(2) *What is known about law enforcement and criminal justice far outstrips what is generally practiced.* Most cities can improve their LE/CJ systems dramatically without inventing "new" approaches.

Observers of the crime problems in this country commonly (and with reason) take a gloomy view of our state of knowledge, because we are so far from having answers to the bedrock questions about preventing crime and rehabilitating criminals. But this should not obscure the vast number of effective ways of doing things, particularly in management, which are not yet being applied in most cities.

The distinction between "improvement" and "innovation" applies to the state-of-the-art issue as well. The Pilot Cities experience supports the proposition that *innovation is often unnecessary to improve the state of the LE/CJ art*, because

(3) *What has been tried in law enforcement and criminal justice far outstrips what has been learned from the experience.* The state of the art can be improved dramatically by learning more about what we already are doing or have done.

How many community-based corrections projects (to take a current example) have been tried, in how many variations? Put conservatively, the answer must be in the dozens. How much is really known about which types

make economic or correctional sense? Put generously, the state of our knowledge is not commensurate with the extent of the experimentation. In absolute terms, we know very little.

The above are reasons that innovation is often not a *necessary* condition for improvement, either in operations or in knowledge. In addition, there are two factors which suggest that they may actually be *competitive* in an operational setting.

First,

(4) *The conditions that are required to implement and evaluate an innovation tend to be incompatible with the operational interests of a local LE/CJ agency.*

Procedures that are often essential to a valid test of an innovation--control groups, standardization within treatment groups, redundancy of observations, and the rest--tend to be awkward, disruptive, pain-in-the-neck things for an agency to do while it is also trying to get on with its daily operational responsibilities. Sometimes, experimental procedures can also be professionally disquieting to the LE/CJ official. Innovations in criminal justice almost inevitably affect the treatment of human beings. If the innovation looks promising, it appears to be inhumane and unreasonable to deliberately withhold it from a control group. If the innovation looks chancy, it is difficult to rationalize the continued use of people as guinea pigs. For both administrative and functional reasons, innovation can easily clash with the interests of the local agency.

Second, if it is to be truly new and untried, innovation on a small scale can easily deflect resources from the areas most urgently in need of improvement:

(5) *Innovations tend to deal with issues on the periphery of LE/CJ needs*, when they take place in a local setting with modest resources.

And this was precisely the setting in which the Teams had to operate. They were given a mandate to "innovate," and they soon found that there are very few projects which (1) can be done with some modest fraction of $500,000 per year *and* (2) require no changes in state

laws or local ordinances *and* (3) deal squarely with the central issues of changing criminal behavior and dispensing more equitable justice *and* (4) have never been tried anywhere before. Teams characteristically had to choose between dealing with a central issue or producing a genuine innovation. It is this fact which we believe explains the empirically demonstrated lack of relationship between the "innovativeness" of a project and the measures of its utility locally and elsewhere.[25] Without exception, the Teams leaned toward projects which met the utility criterion even if it meant sacrifice to the innovation criterion.

In combination, these characteristics of the conflict between innovation and improvement suggest four further conclusions. The first one is specific to the Pilot Cities Program:

(6) *The emphasis on innovation in the Pilot Cities Program was a mistake that cut deeply into the impact which might have been achieved.* A simpler mandate to help modernize and integrate the local LE/CJ system would probably have been more productive.

The mirror image conclusion, and one which we believe deserves close scrutiny by LEAA, is that

(7) *The criminal justice systems in the eight Pilot Cities were at a point in development where small increments of technology and expertise were able to produce high payoffs.* And the systems in those eight cities do not appear to be atypical of other cities of comparable size.

The third conclusion, which appears to have been missed in the GAO report, is that

(8) *The Pilot Team approach can be quite efficient as a means of introducing these cost-effective changes.*

The approach is essentially a good one. Suggestions

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[25] "Tradeoffs Between Improvement and Innovation," 161-163.

for applying it are given in recommendations 21 to 40.

Finally,

(9) *The Pilot Cities experience suggests that LEAA should reassess how best to stimulate advances in the state of the art.* For this, the Pilot Cities concept is not an efficient approach.

In this respect, our findings are consistent with the GAO evaluation. We turn now to the implications of the Program's failure to meet expectations on this objective.

2. *Contributions to the LE/CJ State of the Art.* Advancing the state of the art remains one of LEAA's important missions. We have suggested that the Pilot Team approach is not an appropriate vehicle for accomplishing that mission. But beyond the questions specific to the Pilot Cities Program, the record consistently suggested reasons for concluding on a broader basis that

(10) *Advancing the state of the art by finding "new ways of doing things" may be of low priority as a tool for advancing knowledge about urban criminal justice.* Consolidating our knowledge about current techniques is probably more productive at this point.

Certainly the notion of the brand-new, never-before-tried solution was given too much emphasis by some of the Regional Offices. It was also overemphasized, we believe, in the GAO assessment of the Pilot Cities Program--and that in turn reflects the high standing it originally had in LEAA/Washington as an inspiration for the Pilot Cities Program.

But while the value of the unique innovation was being overemphasized, another equally distracting overemphasis was developing. A second basic conclusion about advancing the state of the art is that

(11) "Evaluation" threatens to replace "innovation" as the magic word. But *across-the-board evaluation is not the answer.* The current tendency to evaluate everything is deflective.

These two general conclusions provide the context for a number of more specific points, as follow.

Improving the State of Knowledge about Current Practices. In the process of examining the demonstration projects developed by the Pilot Teams, it was repeatedly brought out that

(12) *Authoritative evaluations are still lacking for some fundamental law enforcement and criminal justice practices.*

The ratings of the nine judges who examined the Pilot demonstrations clearly point to the sad state of our knowledge about current LE/CJ practices. The highest ratings on "potential contribution to the state of the art" went to projects which were entirely prosaic in content (e.g., augmentation of the staff of a prosecutor's office, or establishment of a public defender's office), but which promised to provide some basic evaluative information about them. It is incredible that these kinds of topics have not already been thoroughly and rigorously explored in the literature. But they have not been, according to people whose work keeps them abreast of that literature. Accordingly, one operational recommendation is that

(13) *LEAA should define a few central unresolved issues in LE/CJ practice, and provide the funds and expertise to mount specially designed demonstrations and authoritative evaluations of them.*

Examples of such issues are: What would mandatory sentences do to crime rates? What would happen if plea bargaining were eliminated? How does decriminalization of status offenses affect rates for other offenses? These are not researchable questions as they are phrased here. But they could be made researchable, given LEAA's resources. We can think of no more dramatic contribution that LEAA could make than to provide answers to a dozen live questions about existing strategies for preventing crime, catching criminals, and reducing recidivism.

It must be stressed that *accomplishing this objective means more than setting aside money for a few large evaluation contracts. The demonstrations themselves must be designed explicitly as test cases.* Significant advances in the state of the art exact several prices

that LEAA should be ready to pay. They apply equally to advances through the definitive evaluation of current practices and to evaluation of innovations.

The first cost arises from the nature of an operational setting. To recapitulate the essential point, thorough evaluation means disruption in the established operational routine. Therefore, two typical reactions of a local agency are (1) to resist cooperating with a proposed project unless there are advantages that compensate for the disruption; or (2) to revise the initial plan--and contaminate its instructive value--in order to make it more compatible with existing procedures. *Both of these responses are sensible ones in terms of the bureaucratic interests of the operating agency, and they should not be seen as evidence of inherent resistance to change.* As we examined problems encountered by Pilot Cities projects, a persistent reaction on our part was one of sympathy for local agency officials who were being perceived as resistant and uncooperative by Pilot Associates. For very often the line between *helping* an agency and *using* it was a thin one.[26]

One conclusion, then, is that

(14) *If LEAA intends to sponsor and evaluate genuinely innovative approaches, it should be prepared to pay all the bills and take special measures to compensate the agency for its trouble.*

A second conclusion is that in these instances

(15) *LEAA should also exercise direct control over design and implementation of the project*, to ensure that its experimental value is retained.

Control is, of course, linked to total financing by LEAA, which provides the necessary leverage for making outside control acceptable.

Further, the Pilot Cities experience suggests that

(16) *The price of advancement typically makes the grant application mechanism inappropriate as a means for identifying and sponsoring worthwhile innovative projects.*

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[26] "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103.

This conclusion is discussed at greater length in the full report.[27] The main point is that the use of the grant application for "choosing" the Pilot Cities was a charade which inhibited a clear statement of what LEAA wanted out of the Program and which papered over the reservations and confusions among the new grantees.[28]

The sum of these conclusions is that

(17) *Projects to advance the state of the art characteristically require LEAA to call the shots, with very little room for local improvisation.*

In many respects, this stance is at odds with LEAA's recent moves toward decentralization. But the conflict exists, and must be recognized.

General Evaluation Policy. It is also recommended that LEAA cut back sharply on the money it spends evaluating run-of-the-mill projects. For, based on the 151 projects which were examined in the course of the Pilot Cities evaluation, we are led to conclude that

(18) *The great majority of projects funded by LEAA need only simple, inexpensive evaluations.* Most of these could be accomplished in-house, using routinely gathered data.

Almost all of the 151 projects fell in the category of "good things to do."[29] If the grantee completed the inputs specified in the application and achieved the immediate outcomes, the projects could safely be called successes in terms of using tax dollars responsibly. Trying to determine whether they were successes in some more ultimate sense is probably *not* a sensible use of tax dollars, because *virtually none of the projects was evaluable in terms of impact on crime rates and criminal behavior.* They were almost always too short, too uncontrolled, or too small to permit measurement of these ultimate consequences. The evaluations were also repetitive--one juvenile diversion evaluation tends to read

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27 "Improving the State of Knowledge about Current Practices," 181-183.

28 "The Evolution of Objectives," 11-17.

29 "Demonstration Projects," 107-115.

very much like another, in its speculation about impact.

In short, it is suggested that unless there is good reason to believe that a full-scale evaluation will help answer important unresolved issues, it should not be conducted. To replace the full-scale evaluation,

(19) *LEAA should develop routinely collected measures into an in-house evaluation process*, for projects which do not require an elaborate impact assessment.

Much can be done to make evaluation a natural part of the management process.

The preceding recommendations for advancing the state of the art have sketched an active, intervention-ist style for LEAA. We now turn to recommendations for improving local LE/CJ systems, and to a very different set of implications for LEAA's role.

3. Improving Local Criminal Justice Systems. As we stated at the outset, the summary lesson of the evaluation is that the central concept of the Pilot Cities Program is sound: the small, independent team working with agencies throughout the city and county is a promising approach to improving local LE/CJ systems, and one which should be pursued.[30] Embedded in that conclusion are two points that need to be emphasized.

First, the Pilot Cities Program was an experiment. Mistakes were made, some avoidable and some not. There were failures. But it appears that at some point the experimental nature of the Program was forgotten and the failures became the focus of attention. The decision to phase out the Pilot Cities Program was one outcome of this new focus, and a decision which we believe was unfortunate. *The existence of failures somehow came to be interpreted as proof that the concept was at fault, and this is a specious conclusion.*

The second point which needs emphasis is that in terms of the validity of the concept, *the successful Teams were successful for the right reasons, and the unsuccessful Teams were unsuccessful for the "right"*

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[30] See page 1 of the Summary (conclusion #20 in the full report)

reasons. The innovative aspect of the Pilot Cities approach was described by the San Jose Director as being its "flea-ism"--the Team's ability to move easily and quickly among the "elephants" of the LE/CJ system.[31] The successes of Teams in all of the cities bear out the value of this kind of bureaucratic mobility and independence. *The Teams were able to do certain things, particularly in the field of inter-agency cooperation, which the agencies could not do for themselves.* Similarly, the failures were for the right reasons. That is, the reasons for failure generally were not related to the concept, but to process variables and disposing conditions which could more readily be identified and then skirted, with the Pilot Cities history as a guide.[32]

Overall, then, it is the conclusion of this evaluation that the Pilot Team concept should be further applied as a means of improving local systems. But as the full report indicates throughout, *this should not be done using the program design and administrative mechanisms of the Pilot Cities Program.*

In fact, there is no compelling reason why future applications of the city/county team concept have to be conducted on a programmatic basis at all.[33] It is recommended that

(21) *LEAA should establish as policy that support of city/county teams modeled on the Pilot Team approach is an appropriate use of discretionary funds.*

If this is done, the following guidelines are recommended to avoid the problems faced by the Pilot Teams. The guidelines are presented here in summary form. A more detailed discussion is given on pages 186-192 of the full report.

The Director. The first priority is to hire the right director. Find that person, and many of the

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[31] Robert Cushman, "The Pilot Cities Experience," in *The Change Process in Criminal Justice*, NILECJ, 1973, 46.

[32] "Team Strategies," 90-96; "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103; "Impact and Procedures," 169-172.

[33] "team" in the lower case refers to the general concept of a city/county team, not to the Pilot Team structure as specified in the Pilot Cities Program design.

other problems will take care of themselves. Some specific recommendations are:

(22) *The director of the city/county team should be genuinely expert in the field of criminal justice.*

Simply being a practitioner--a former police chief or attorney--is not enough by itself. And hiring someone with no LE/CJ background at all is asking for disaster.[34]

(23) *The director should be conversant with social science research techniques.*

Expertise is not required, but the director has to be able to speak the language and know the uses of social science research.[35]

(24) *The director should have some experience with municipal governments or negotiation situations.*

Proven ability to balance competing interests in a bureaucratic setting is extremely important. The Pilot Cities experience indicates how difficult it is to learn this skill on the job.[36]

(25) *The director should be full time on the project*, for it is clearly a full-time job.

The first Pilot grants funded the Team Director for only part of his time. The most successful Teams were also ones which quickly moved to a full-time arrangement.[37]

The Team. Turning to the issue of team member qualifications, the overall conclusion about the Pilot Cities Program is that

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[34] "Impact and the Nature of the Team: Personnel Qualifications," 173-175.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103.

[37] "A Note on Organization of the Teams," 41-42.

(26) The Pilot Associates as a group were only marginally qualified by any standard. *Requirements for a few hard, minimum credentials should be defined and followed.*

A mystifying aspect of the Program was why the grantees accepted so many lightly qualified people for well-paid jobs, in an employer's job market.[38]

(27) *The general importance of expertise in criminal justice applies to the team members as well as to the director.*

Associates with no background in LE/CJ fields were seldom productive, unless they were acting as the resident expert on research.[39] And that leads to the next recommendation, that

(28) *The team should possess at least one member with professional social science research credentials.*

The ability to do complex research competently was essential to fulfilling the mission of a Pilot Cities Team. Teams too often were unable to meet this function; they had personnel with advanced degrees in social science fields, but that is not synonymous with expertise in social science research.[40]

(29) *Local experience should take last priority in selecting team members.*

The Pilot Cities Program indicates that the best long-term entree to the local system was solid professional qualification, not connection with a local old-boy network.[41]

Process. The importance of following a particular process was probably overestimated in the early

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[38] "The Initial Teams," 41-56.

[39] "Impact and the Nature of the Team," 172-175.

[40] "The Ideal Pilot Team Associate: Research Credentials," 45-48.

[41] "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103; "Impact and the Nature of the Team," 172-175

stages of the Pilot Cities Program, but insofar as it does have an effect on success, it is recommended that

(30) *The basic process sequence specified in the Pilot grant applications was sound and should be retained.*

We do suggest three changes in emphasis. First,

(31) *Greater stress can be put on an activist approach.*

A good team can take the lead in suggesting ideas and advocating positions.[42]

(32) *The collection and analysis of baseline data should support ongoing planning activities*, and not exist in a vacuum.

Baseline data can provide a useful planning tool, but they should not be compilations of crime statistics and budget breakdowns. They should be collected in support of team responses to the problem areas that stand out in the minds of local officials.[43]

(33) *Finding the right agencies to work with is often more important than finding the most "important" problems*, particularly at the outset.

Finding an agency which was willing to let the Pilot Team get to work quickly and show results quickly was extremely helpful in establishing credibility with the local system. Once credibility was established, other doors opened.[44]

Support and Monitoring. On this topic, the lesson of the Program seems to have been that the right support may not be able to push success on a poor Team, but the wrong support could cause a potentially adequate Team to fail. Our general recommendation for future

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[42] "Team Strategies," 90-96; "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103; "Impact and Procedures," 169-172.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

efforts is that

(34) *The city/county team needs maximum independence from LEAA*, as well as from the local LE/CJ agencies.

Once the personnel have been selected, the useful support that LEAA can provide seems to be very limited.[45] Even the Pilot O funds were not a crucial factor, leading to the recommendation that

(35) *Some demonstration funding should be made available, but it need not be a central component of the program design.*

De-emphasis of demonstration funding would also facilitate independence from the Regional Office, which is especially desirable:

(36) *The Regional Office's responsibility for team performance should be restricted to financial monitoring.*

Regional Offices could not make a bad Pilot Team good; it is unreasonable to expect that they could. They should not be given authority to attempt the impossible.[46]

Selection of Sites and Grantees. NILECJ devoted a substantial effort to site selection, and the AIR team spent a great deal of time evaluating this effort. After the fact, it seems that both parties spent too much time worrying about details of a matter which is, at best, of secondary importance. For the evidence indicates that

(37) *There is no apparent demographic or political profile of a good site.* A good site is one that really wants a team.

There is no evidence that the most successful Pilot Teams owed any significant portion of their success to an inherent receptivity of the local environment. What did matter was whether the environment was inherently hostile. Judging from the experiences in the eight selected

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[45] "Impact and Procedures," 169-172.

[46] "The Regional Offices and Process," 104-105.

cities, it appears that

(38) In considering a grant application for a city/county team, *it is more important and much easier to identify unsuitable cities than to rank order cities which appear to be suitable.*[47]

And to ensure that the team does not arrive in a suitable city/county, only to encounter difficulties with the state planning apparatus,

(39) *It should be determined whether the State Planning Agency (SPA) explicitly endorses the application for a team*, not just whether it is willing to "sign off" on it.

If possible, the SPA should know and endorse the prospective director of the team.[48]

A final consideration in the selection of grantees, though not necessarily a decisive one, should be whether the grantee knows or cares about criminal justice. If possible,

(40) *The grantee should have an institutional interest directly related to criminal justice.*

Most of the Pilot Cities grantees had no institutional stake in LE/CJ, and some of them were remarkably indifferent to their Pilot Team's substantive activities or the professionalism of its members.[49]

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The many specific guidelines for applying the team approach are based on five years of experience in eight cities. Hindsight has made many of the guide-

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[47] Section IV, SITE SELECTION, 23-40; Section VI, THE CLIENTS, 65-87; "Impact and the Sites," 168-169.

[48] "Tactics in Project Development," 96-103.

[49] "Application of the Grantee Criterion," 38-40.

lines look like the obvious thing to do in the first place, when in fact the issues were not at all clear at the outset. But even after recognizing the problems that the Program's designers faced, it remains our conclusion that *the Pilot Cities history is one of a good idea that was poorly translated into an action program.* And the fundamental reason for the design failure is worth mentioning, even though we have no prescriptions for preventing it the next time:

> (41) *LEAA and NILECJ failed to think through exactly why the Program was being established and what it was intended to accomplish, and consequently could not base a program design on those purposes.*

This does not mean that the Program was started casually, or that objectives were not specified. There was no shortage of objectives for the Pilot Cities Program. Rather, the Program designers failed to pare down the list, establish priorities, and, most of all, adhere to the spirit of the original idea.

As we have been able to reconstruct the process, the progenitors of the team approach had a good idea, but one which was ultimately bound up with finding the right people, not following the right procedures. Roughly put, the applicants for what became the first Pilot Team said to LEAA that they had some people who were competent in criminal justice fields, who had thought carefully about the problems of introducing change, who had tempered those ideas in previous projects, and, as a result of all of these conditions, had developed an approach which would let them do good things in San Jose if LEAA would give them the money. Then came a prolonged series of interactions between the prospective grantee and LEAA. At the end of it, the language of the grant application had been changed and some cosmetic aspects of the program itself had been changed. But the rationale for *why* the idea would work had been lost in the shuffle of revisions, and along with it had been lost the implications for replicating the program elsewhere.

Instead, the vehicle for replicating the project was a shopping list of objectives and procedures tacked on by a procession of persons who participated in LEAA's end of the negotiations. *Individually*, these persons may have thought very hard indeed about why the Pilot Cities Program was being established and what it was intended to accomplish. But the inconsistencies among

those individual visions of the Program were not resolved. The result was a patchwork of ideas and expectations which could be interpreted in drastically different ways by different people.

Beneath it all was the simple notion that a small team of competent people with bureaucratic mobility and independence can do a lot to improve law enforcement and criminal justice in a city, by helping local officials do certain things and learn certain things that they are not in a position to do and learn alone. Like most simple notions, it was vulnerable to complication. Because of that, the Pilot Cities Program's test of it was a very incomplete one. To the extent that the Program did implement and test it, the soundness of the concept is supported.